Jaworski gets free hand in probe

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Special Watergate Prosecutor Leon Jaworski, hired to direct the House investigation of alleged Korean influence-buying, said Thursday that he'll recommend prosecution of any wrongdoing no matter who is hurt.

"If I find a crook involved in this matter, I want to bring him out and I want the public to know about it," Jaworski told a news conference in Houston.

"It will make no difference to me who is involved in this matter, be they Republicans or Democrats," he said.

Meanwhile, the House ethics committee voted to hire Jaworski as chief investigator of the probe and guaranteed him "full and complete independence." That written promise was contained in a "Memorandum of Understanding" approved by the committee.

Jaworski succeeded Philip A. Lacovara, who quit the job last week in a dispute with Rep. John A. Flynt, D-Ga., chairman of the panel.

Flynt said he expects committee hearings, possibly public, to begin in September on schedule.

Jaworski told reporters he would not tolerate any interference from the committee in getting the facts.

"I am insisting on the right to issue subpoenas without the approval of the House ethics committee," he said. "I don't want anybody telling me who to subpoena or who not to."

Jaworski made clear he'll accept Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill's invitation to complain to O'Neill if he thinks the committee is hampering his investigation.

The committee guarantee promises approval of Jaworski's subpoena requests.

Several members said the committee would allow Jaworski to seek immunity from prosecution for Korean rice dealer Tongsun Park to get him to testify.

A number of congressmen say they accepted campaign contributions and gifts from Park, and the committee is investigating to determine whether Park was acting as an agent of the South Korean government in an effort to buy support in Congress for programs benefitting Korea.

The "Memorandum of Understanding" also specifies that Jaworski can be fired only by the full House.

Jaworski is to take over the investigation fulltime Aug. 15 and the agreement designates one of his law partners, Peter White, as his deputy starting to work immediately.

The committee hired Jaworski and approved the agreement by a 10-0 vote. An 11th member, Rep. Bruce Caputo, R-N.Y., voted "present" after White told the committee he could find no conflict of interest between the investigation and Jaworski's law firm but that he could not say absolutely that there is none.

If any conflicts do develop, White said, they will be disclosed and eliminated.